The Ghwayran Battle and the Last Pocket

We found nothing more adequate with which to commence this volume about the heroic “Ghwayran Epic,” than by beginning at the site where the Crusaders claimed the end of the Islamic State, at the “Last Pocket” - the “Baghuz Massacre” – which, from the onset, cast its shadow on the scene.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the Battle of Ghwayran was not to avenge the Baghuz captives as much as it was the product of the heroism of the Baghuz knights. There are no words to describe their grit and glory! It was the fruit of their patience - for Allah loves the patient. Only twelve inghimasiyyin, whom the murtaddin believed to be hundreds, stormed the most fortified of prisons. Prisoners freeing themselves and capturing their jailers! Fighters welcoming death so that others may live! Muhajiroon and Ansar alike jostled to sacrifice their lives to save their brothers and free them. They charged on, seeing nothing but Allah as the Lord and Jannah as their reward. Driven by the example of their prophet and the precedence set by those who came before them, to become the topmost links, in a golden chain, that support those that follow, and for which many yearn but is attained only by the faithful.

Words do not rightfully give them their due, and phrases cannot sufficiently describe their achievements, for what can words tell of blood? Only through the Ayat (verses) - that they spent nights reciting, and that guided their paths - can their deeds be recounted. They took none but Tawhid as their religion, and when they reached this conviction, they understood that there is no path to protect it but through jihad. So, they filled camps, struck, and burnt with its flames of war all enemies and idols; stone, iron and human alike.

The Almighty Allah said: "Among the believers are men true to what they pledged to Allah. Among them is he who has fulfilled his pledge [with their lives], and among them is he who waits. And they have never changed in the least" (Al-Ahzab: 23). Interpreters say "true to what they pledged to Allah", meaning: they fulfilled it, completed it, sacrificed their souls to accomplish it, and gave themselves in obedience to it. Allah also said: "Among them is he who has fulfilled his pledge", meaning: fulfilled his promise, delivered what he avowed, and was patient in jihad until he was killed. Allah also said "and among them is he who waits", meaning: he awaits the victory promised to him by Allah, and martyrdom like the one his companions attained. Allah then said "and they have never changed in the least", meaning: they did not doubt and questions their religion, nor did they exchange it for another.

Yes, Ayat alone can describe the accomplishments of the descendants of al-Baraa’ bin Malik, Umayr bin al-Hamam, and Samak bin Kharshah – may Allah be pleased with them, and their followers, till the Day of Judgement.

The world in its entirety halted, astounded by the horror of what they were seeing! The same group of believers, who the Crusaders and murtaddin had declared as eliminated in the “last pocket”, was back, striking them again in the heart of their most fortified areas, until they floundered in their statements, doubting and belying each other. Some watched bemused in wonder, some bled in frustration, and the munafiqin lived black days and nights, while some screamed “They are back again!” As for the believers, they rejoiced in the deliverance of Allah’s mercy and success.

The Battle of Ghwayran was not so much a complicated military or security battle, as much as it was a battle of conviction in which the mujahidin of the Islamic State, by the will of Allah, came out victorious.

They were certain that success is granted by Allah, and that death is in the hands of the Almighty alone, and does not come by taking action nor is delayed by standing back. Death comes in any case. The Almighty Allah said: "And no person can ever die except by Allah's Leave and at an appointed term" (Aal-Imran: 145). In interpreting the Ayah, al-Qurtubi, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "This is an urge to jihad, a notice that death is inevitable, and humans whether they are killed or not, will die when their appointed time comes." In commenting on it also, Ibn Kahtir, may Allah have mercy on him, said: “Taking action or standing back does not shorten nor prolong a life.”

It is by the doctrine of fighting that the Khilafah soldiers live. They live with the belief that death is preordained, and a person will not be able to avoid their time of death even if they hid from it in a tower. Therefore, they approach death, chasing it, and see it as a means by which the Prophet’s teachings will return to Muslims. They respond to the call, with content hearts. They are killed, so that they may blow life into their Ummah, and with their blood revive it, in fulfillment of the Almighty’s words: "O believers! Respond to Allah and His Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life" (Al-Anfal: 24).

The Khilafah soldiers responded to what brings energy to their Muslim brothers. They immersed themselves in battle, striking with their swords, and breaking down the walls of prisons. They fought battles that the munafiqin described as “conspiracy” or “theater” and similar terms uttered by those who have lost their conviction.

It is a battle of conviction delivered by those who have embraced death when they lifted their banner, which said: “We seek death not this worldly life.” They vowed to leave this battle free, or be killed, slaves to Allah. We consider that they have fulfilled their pledge to their judge, Allah, and those who survived are free of captivity, and are roaming the earth which Allah gives to whomever He desires. While those who were killed while true to what they had pledged to Allah, we consider them as waiting for the highest of rewards.

We will return to where we started. Have you ever seen a state – other than the Islamic State - whose enemies announce its end once or twice a year, but they were not deterred?! This has been in play since the Baghuz “pocket”, and is seen now in the heroic Battle of Ghwayran, that combined bringing down walls with battles of attrition, in which the leaders of the Islamic State asserted their faith and answered the call of their prophet ﷺ to free prisoners. They only had their blood to give to demonstrate their faithfulness and honesty, so they gave it freely yearning for the Almighty, and the day they will be delivered to his Mercy.

At the end, we will be amiss in not addressing Muslim prisoners everywhere. We say to you that the Battle of Ghwayran is only a page in a book of vengeance, and a record of victory, all chapters of which are not yet completed. Rejoice, hope for glad tidings, and remember the words of the Khalifah Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi – may Allah accept him – when he spoke to you and said: "By Allah we have not forgotten you. We owe you a debt, and we will spare no resources in our efforts to rescue you. Stay faithful to the promise, and support your mujahidin brothers with your supplications and by seeking refuge in the Almighty, for your affairs are in His Hands alone, and relief comes only from Him. Hardship cannot overcome two eases". And Allah has full power and control over His affairs, but most of men know not.